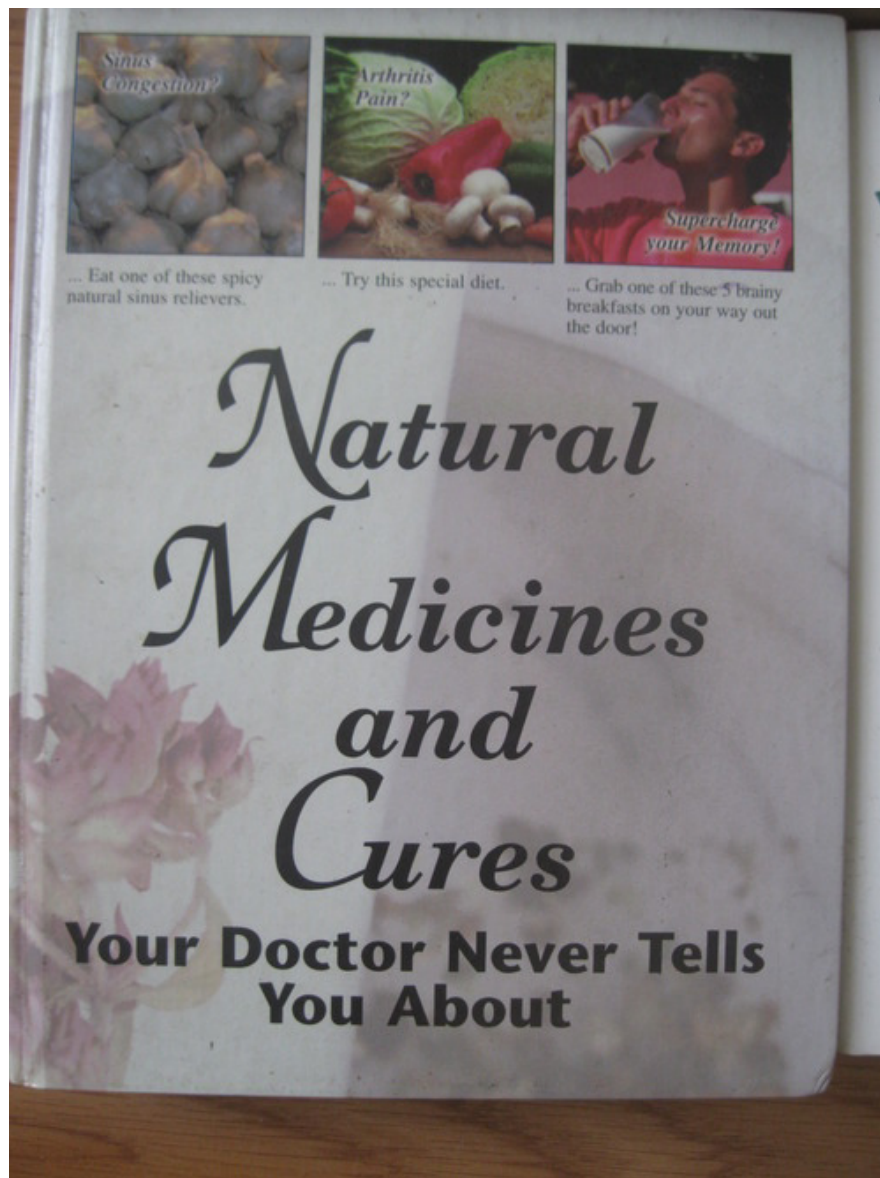


ARRIVAL OF THE LATE AWOONOR'S BODY FROM KENYA

| Arrival of the Late Aw oonor's body from Kenya /

12/1/13 — 1:55am SHORT URL: <http://tumblr.co/ZheKcs-xfGm>

WHERE MYSTICISM MEETS MEDICINE A PHARMACIST IN SENSIBLE BLACK SHOES COMES HOME TO MINNESOTA TO PRACTICE AND TEACH THE ANCIENT ARTS OF HERBALISM AND SHAMANISM.

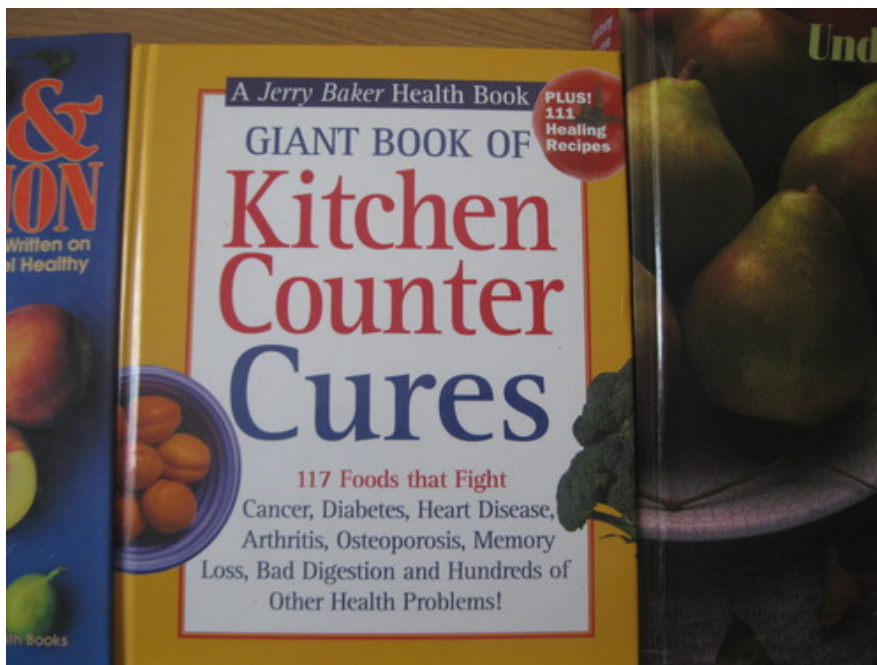


In Ghana, many people who have converted into imported and forced religions on Africans assume that traditional faith practice is only a preserve of primitive non-progressive, school drop out or non-literate Africans. Lacking the critical minds and opened to few literature and faith books that promotes the so called superior foreign religions of the world, many Africans do look down upon their own. Without further research, it is feared that many Africans would continue to ignorantly condemn their own ancestral faith practice in favor of imported ones.

The article below culled from the Minnesota Tribune in the USA is about an "obroni" Caucasian lady who was a trained pharmacist who after many years of practice became an apprentice to a shaman in Peru, a country in South America to become a Shaman herself. A shaman is the Peru equivalent of the Ghanaian Okomfo or Traditional Priest and healer. We are motivated to share the article because of the similarities in the experiences and the strenght of these two traditions across two continents. The belief in nature spirits and the intersection of Healing, Ecology and Nature. Our desired goal is to strengthen the faith of every folk trained spiritualist and healer to continue to work to help humanity.

Enjoy a good read.

PREKESE GHANAMEDIA



By Josephine Marcotty
Staff Writer

On the second floor of an anonymous building on a side street in St. Louis Park, a shamana is at work. As cars trundle by outside her office window, she sings and taps a plant rattle across her client's back as she calls for the Great Spirit to heal body, heart and mind.

Connie Grauds, 59, a pharmacist who grew up in Forest Lake, practices her ancient healing art with one foot in this world and the other in the realm of the irrational. She says she has become a conduit for the life force in nature.

Yes, she knows it all sounds like a lot of exotic "voodoo and woo-woo." But there she is, with her pouf of blond hair and sensible black shoes, calling on energy that is invisible to most of us to heal the people who come to her with emotional and physical troubles.

"I'm not a scary person," she said. "It happens to be my avocation, and as unusual as it is, I didn't ask for it." Rather, she was called to it, she said, when she met a spiritual healer in the Amazon rain forest in Peru. There, where the jungle rises in layer after layer to the sky, she trained 13 years to learn about medicinal and spiritual powers in plants and how to use them for healing.

She is teaching some of what she learned to students enrolled in a new two-year clinical herbalism program at Minneapolis Community and Technical College. It's the nation's first **degree program** in herbalism, the use of medicinal plants to promote healing. Grauds, who also teaches at the University of Minnesota's Center for Spirituality and Healing, is planning a program in shamanism, the belief that life-giving spirits from the natural world can heal.

Her efforts are part of the growing demand for non-conventional **health care**, the kind of holistic and spiritual healing practices rarely found in a doctor's office or via prescription, said Dr. Karen Lawson, who teaches a course on shamanism at the Center for Spirituality and Healing.

Many such complementary health practices "have core philosophies that acknowledge the role of spirit or unifying energy or life that explains how these things are connected," Lawson said. Shamanism is probably the oldest one of all, she said, and is practiced in one form or another by indigenous people worldwide.

"It's based on the understanding that all things are alive, all things are connected, all things are impacted by worlds both seen and unseen," Lawson said.

Grauds does not practice traditional healing in lieu of Western scientific medicine. She sees them as complementary. Her work is called for when scientific medicine has done all that it can. At that point, she said, it's time to turn to the world of the irrational.

"I dispense spiritual medicine," she said.

For most of her life, she dispensed the other kind. Grauds graduated from the University of Minnesota's Pharmacy School in 1969 and became a believer in the pharmaceutical silver bullet. That early belief in hard, skeptical science was formed partly by her mother, who became delusional when Grauds was 3.

"She started seeing things and hearing voices," Grauds said. She was sent to a psychiatric hospital, where she had 17 electric-shock treatments. She became functional, but for the rest of Grauds' childhood, "I always thought my mother was about to go crazy."

Her father, however, was like the farmer with the pitchfork in the painting "American Gothic" - the epitome of stoicism. He was consistent and honorable and supported his family with a dry cleaning business. Grauds grew up with faith in the hard facts of the known, and a fear of the

places her mother went.

Became disillusioned

Grauds worked for 20 years in San Francisco, handing out the same kinds of pills to the same people over and over, and became disillusioned by it all.

"She recognized the limitations of being a registered pharmacist," said former husband Dean Grauds, who is still close to her. "She realized a lot of our thinking was influenced by the need to sell drugs."

In 1994 she stumbled across an article in a journal on medicinal plants in the Amazon and was intrigued by its description of the ancient healing tradition and natural pharmaceuticals. A few months later she signed up for a pharmacists' excursion to the Iquitos region of northern Peru to learn about the healing practices of its natives.

Deep in the jungle she was offered the chance to participate in a private healing by one of the local shamans. Grauds described the experience in her book, "Jungle Medicine," published in 2004.

It seemed like harmless fun at first, but as the shaman blew tobacco smoke over her in a dark hut, her body went into an arching, shaking fit. When she walked out of the hut, she fell over, "infused with some kind of energy that my body didn't know what to do with." When the shaman came out, he touched her neck, and the spasms stopped. She had a block in her neck, the shaman explained.

Bewildered and frightened, she met with an even more powerful shaman the next day. She spilled out her story to him, even describing her mother's mental illness and her own frustrations with her job. When she had finished, he said only this: "You have enough energy to be a shaman yourself."

But the shaman would not say anything more. Grauds went home to a frustrating job, a failing marriage, and, she found out 18 months later, thyroid cancer in her neck. It took her two years to get through the emotional and physical bottom she hit after returning from Peru.

"She had a bona fide spiritual experience," said Dean Grauds, a psychotherapist. "She had a glimpse of the bigger picture and more of a pronounced direction."

During those two years, she began to work with an herbalist and launched the Association of Natural Medicine Pharmacists to teach others in her profession about medicinal plants. And she began to believe that she had a special connection to plants.

In 1996 she returned to Peru and was accepted as an apprentice by the shaman who first hinted at her new calling. Over the next 10 years she returned time and again. She worked in a medicinal herb garden near a village and learned about the powers of various jungle plants. She opened up to the belief that not all healing can be understood. It is mysterious. But no more mysterious than, say, quantum physics or the placebo effect, she said. And some of it is just semantics.

"We would say that an herb has an active ingredient" that promotes healing, she said. "A shaman would say that there is a powerful spirit doctor in that herb."

The kinds of experiences that led her mother to ruin have enriched her and made her life whole and far more potent, she said.

"So am I crazy like my mother after all?" she writes in her book. "If I am, so be it."



MINNESOTA MEDICINAL PLANTS

Medicinal plants have been used in healing since ancient times, and many pharmaceuticals today come from plants. Here are a few grown in Minnesota that some believe have healing properties.

Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*): Used for respiratory problems and coughs. Applied topically, it is believed to soften and protect skin.

Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*): Believed to work as a diuretic and to detoxify, primarily the liver and gallbladder.

Motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca*): Believed to open blood vessels and relax muscles. Historically used as a cardiac tonic.

Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*): Traditionally used to reduce fevers.

Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*): Has been used topically as a wound-healer because it is believed to slow bleeding. Used orally, it is believed to have antimicrobial properties, and to help with gastrointestinal problems and high blood pressure.

Source: Connie Grauds, herbalism expert

11/13/13 — 12:42am SHORT URL: http://tumblr.co/ZheKcs_GiRtG

ONIPA ABUSIA ODWIRA GET TOGETHER: THE EXPERIENCE YOU MISSED.



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If you saw the above flyer somewhere and dismissed it as one of those community events, then my brother/sister, you missed an opportunity to socialize, connect with the ancestors, reflect over the year and special time of your life.



The Odwira event held in Queens< New York yesterday was superb, organic, sweet, spectacular, fulfilling and cultural. This is an event that had almost everyone who counts as far as the Akan culture in America is concerned gathering at one place to celebrate a new year which was originally started by the late Okomfohene Nana Yaw Opare Dinizulu. From Akomfompanyimfo Nana Esi Dinizulu, Nana Adwoa Opare, Okomfohemaa Nana Amoaba Botwe, Nana Ansa Ate, Nana Kojo Ayensu, Nana Akosua Baakan Okukuranpon Yirenkyiwa, Nana Kodua, Nana Afua, Okomfo Kwesi Nkrumah, Okomfo Amankwa to many more, the event was set to a splendid standard quality. The MCs were Nana Nsiah of Washington DC and Okomfo Kwabena Annan of New York.



There was DJ Music provided by DJ Laurex as patrons, invited guests and members trooped in. Then, we had the procession by the young people (the future generation of Akom practitioners) carrying various types of articles of faith in memories of our ancestors. The libations by Okomfohemaa Nana Adwoa Opare and Larteh Asuo Gyebi Komfopanyin Afoaa was moving.



As for DJ Music dancing time., you do not need to be told what happened. We have never seen excited people dance so well and with energy like this before. One could not know whether a dancer was a child or an adult with the sort of freestyle and choreographed dance movements exhibited there. Yes, the kids were having fun. Our favorite part during the dance was the Electric Boogie and Cha Cha Slide



dances.

Succulent and Delicious dishes from Nkate Nkw an w ith salmon, nkate nkwan w ith chicken, BBQ chicken, Beef Sauce and Soups, Salads, Cakes, assorted drinks to a lot of food brought in by the patrons themselves. OMG! I heard that Aunty Abena What's YouCooking was the cook for that peanut soup w ith the salmon. Hey Aunty, what is the recipe secret? Oh Mine Oh Mine, I rarely eat at programs but for this time, I couldn't help it. Does she own a "Chop Bar" anyw here in New York? Still talking about food, It w as nice and spectacular to watch each table of 10 people w ith their ow n unique w ays of decorating theirs tables w ith assorted drinks, fruits, chips etc.....Oh Yummy. Are you hungry? hahahahaha dont blame anybody Okay!



And then to the next segment of the program that featured the Dance group by name INNERVISION...Oh Mine, what an energetic group of diligent dancers, drummers and staff! That drummer in the wheelchair was the toast of the people. What is his name again? Hey Wofa Yaw Ababio, the New York's undisputed Djembe King, who was supporting was in his versatile self as he entertained the audience with his skills



and style.

The spiritual component of the evening was led by Okonfohemaa Nana Esi Dinizulu on vocals. The lead drummer of Onipa Abusia, Wofa Amoah captivated the audience with his natural flow of rhythms supported by his 7 powerful drummers on bells, apentema, petia and some idiophones. The singing was good and dancing was well done.



In the end there was one thing we all have to learn. In Unity and Collative Support we stand as we continue the legacy of Akan Traditions in America which was pioneered through a collaboration between Ghana and the United States via Okomfohene Nana Operebeah of Larteh-Kubease and Okomfohene Nana Yao Opere Dinizulu. Did you miss anything? Who is to blame?

Ayikoo to everybody:

OKYEREMA BEGYEDOM KATAKYIE

10/27/13 — 5:03pm SHORT URL: <http://tumblr.co/ZheKcsyoK9GP>

OKOMFO (SANGOMA) CONFRONTS PASTOR OVER JUJU FOR CHURCH GROWTH



Drama unfolded at Adansi Anwiaso in the Adansi North District of the Ashanti region last Friday when a fetish priest in an apparent trance, descended on a pastor in his church to demand the balance of an agreed fee for juju he allegedly gave the man of God to expand his ministry.

The fetish priest, Nana Boafo Mosi of the Boafo Mosi Shrine at Adansi Anwiaso told the Daily Graphic that he was driven by his gods to confront the founder and leader of the Life Chapel International Ministry, Rev. Dr Bright Nana Okai Aba, at Kyekyerewere near Obuasi to demand the amount of GH¢1,050, which he owed him for the spiritual work he did for him.

Following verbal exchanges that ensued between the fetish priest and the pastor, the traditional authorities of the community have summoned them for fighting in public.

They are due to appear before the chief's court on Tuesday on the charge of fighting in public in contravention of local customary laws prohibiting fighting in public.

Both the pastor and priest have in separate interviews with the Daily Graphic confirmed the summons issued to them.

Nana Mosi who claimed to have over 10,000 gods spread across the country said he was approached by the pastor in March this year to help him grow his church.

He said the pastor claimed to have heard of his powers and therefore wanted him to help grow the church which at the time had only nine members.

Nana Mosi said he demanded GH¢1,200 before delving into the spiritual world to fortify Rev. Dr Bright Nana Okai Aba and also grow the church but the latter returned later pleading that he had only GH¢150 on him and that he would settle the balance later.

According to the fetish priest, he gave some water to Rev. Dr Nana Ababio to use in washing his face which was to open his eyes spiritually to see hidden things.

He also handed over some concoction to the pastor to bury in the ground near his church, promising the Man of God that in a month's time the membership of the church would grow from nine to 40.

He said two weeks later the pastor called to inform him that the membership of the church had reached 39.

The fetish priest stated that the pastor having failed to honour his promise to pay the balance, he sent a young fetish priestess to demand the money but the pastor refused to pay.

Last Friday, Rev Dr Nana Ababio went to Adansi Anwiaso to undertake official activities in a new church he had planted in the town and whilst meeting his congregation in a house which served as a temporary meeting place, Nana Mosi stormed the house to demand his money.

Fierce exchanges of words ensued, drawing almost the entire community to the scene and the chiefs had no option but to summon the two before the traditional court for acting contrary to the traditional laws.

According to Nana Mosi, he was driven by the gods to confront the pastor and that he could not recall what he did or said in the church.

When the Daily Graphic contacted Rev Dr Nana Ababio, he refused to give details.

He only indicated that he had lodged a complaint with the police against the fetish priest and would therefore not speak to any journalist whilst the case was pending at the police station, promising however that he would speak up when the police have completed their work.

By Kwame Asare Boadu, Kumasi
Daily Graphic/graphic.com.gh/Ghana

10/11/13 — 2:45am SHORT URL: <http://tumblr.co/ZheKcsxLkh4G>

AFRICAN TRADITIONAL FAITH PRACTICE- FOCUS ON VODOU



Vodun or Vudun (spirit in the Fon and Ewe languages, pronounced [vodũ] with a nasal high-tone u; also spelled Vodon, Vodoun, Voudou, Voodoo etc.) is an indigenous organized religion of coastal West Africa from Ghana to Nigeria. Vodun is practiced by the Ewe people of eastern and southern Ghana, and southern and central Togo, the Kabye people, Mina people and Fon people of southern and central Togo, southern and central Benin and (under a different name) the Yoruba of southw estern Nigeria.



It is distinct from the various traditional animistic religions in the interiors of these same countries and is the main origin for religions of similar name found among the African Diaspora in the New World such as Haitian Vodou, the Vudu of Puerto Rico, Candomblé Jeje in Brazil (w hich uses the term Vodum), Winti in Surinam (w hich is also synchronized w ith native American aspects), Louisiana Voodoo and Santería in Cuba and the Dominican Republic. All these are synchronized w ith Christianity and the traditional religions of the Congo people of Congo and



Angola.

Vodun cosmology centers around the vodun spirits and other elements of divine essence that govern the Earth, a hierarchy that range in power from major deities governing the forces of nature and human society to the spirits of individual streams, trees, and rocks, as well as dozens of ethnic vodun, defenders of a certain clan, tribe, or nation.



The vodun are the centre of religious life, similarly in many ways to doctrines such as the intercession of saints and angels that made Vodun appear compatible with Christianity, especially Catholicism, and produced synchronized religions such as Haitian Vodou. Adherents also emphasize ancestor worship and hold that the spirits of the dead live side by side with the world of the living, each family of spirits having its own female priesthood, sometimes hereditary when is from mother to blood daughter.



Patterns of worship follow various dialects, gods, practices, songs and rituals. Vodun recognizes one God with many helpers called Loa. A single divine Creator, called variously Mawu or Nana Buluku is an androgynous being who in one tradition bore seven children and gave each rule over a realm of nature - animals, earth, and sea - or else these children are inter-ethnic and related to natural phenomena or to historical or mythical individuals. The creator embodies a dual cosmogony principle of which Mawu the moon and Lisa the sun are respectively the female and male aspects, often portrayed as the twin children of the Creator.



Mawu's youngest child, Legba, was to remain with her and act as a go-between with her other children: in some clans he is young and virile while in Haiti he takes the form of an old man. Other deities might include Mami Wata, god/desses of the waters, Ogou, ruling iron and smithcraft, Sakpata, who rules diseases and many others. Eshu, a messenger deity who relays messages between the human world and the world of the Orishas, is depicted as a dark, short man with a large staff and often a pipe, candy or his fingers in his mouth. As the mediator between the gods and the living he maintains balance, order, peace and communication.



All creation is considered divine and therefore contains the power of the divine. This is how medicines such as herbal remedies are understood, and explains the ubiquitous use of mundane objects in religious ritual. Voodoo talismans, called "fetishes", are objects such as statues or dried animal parts that are sold for their healing and spiritually rejuvenating properties.



Priests Often described as queen mother is the first daughter of a patriarchal lineage of a family collective, she holds the right to lead the ceremonies incumbent to the clan: marriages, baptisms and funerals. She is considered the one of the most important members of community. She will lead the women of a village when her family collective is the ruling one. Her dominant role has often been confused or associated to that of a high priestess which she is not. They take part in the organization and the running of markets and are also responsible for their upkeep, which is vitally important because marketplaces are the focal points for gatherings and social centres in their communities. In the past when the men of the villages would go to war, the Queen Mothers would lead prayer ceremonies in which all the women attended every morning to ensure the safe return of their men folk.



The High priestess is on the other hand, the woman chosen by the oracle to care for the convent. Priestesses like priests receive a calling from an oracle at any moment of their lives. They will then join clan's convent to pursue a spiritual instruction. It is also, an oracle that will designate the future High priest and high priestess among the new recruits establishing an order of succession within the convent. Only blood relatives were allowed in the family convent strangers are forbidden. In modern days however some of the rules have been changed enabling non family members to enter what is described as the first circle of worship. Strangers are allowed to worship only the spirits of the standard pantheon.



Confusion and an amalgam are often made between vodun and Bò also called O bò or Juju in Yoruba. Bò is an occult science whose priest is called Bòkònon or Bòkòtònon in opposition to vodunsi (vodun female priestess) and vodunon (vodun male priest). Contrary to popular beliefs, in West African vodun, spells are not cast upon someone.



Vodun is only a spiritual cult in which an important part is devoted to the cult of the ancestors. Even if the origin of humanity and the world are explained in vodun mythology, it is not a centered question of the faith. The followers believe that the answer to such question is beyond human reach. Priority is given to the ancestors with them interceding on behalf of their families and descendant towards the Almighty. If an Almighty creator is recognized in vodun pantheon, the believers do not address themselves to that particular deity. Only the Loas, the messengers with the help of the dead have that access. In order to communicate and pray every clan and sometimes each family root have their own vodun sometimes called Assanyi as vodun can also be translated as "The spirit of those who have passed before us". The family vodun is often associated with a known higher spirit of the standard pantheon, but is distinctive to each family (clan). This distinctiveness is the Clan vodun is also an assertion of identity and origin with cult and worshipping process specific to a family collective.



The occult science of Bô is not vodun, although it often summons spirits issued from the vodun pantheon in its process. The amalgam probably occurred through foreign observation and explanation of the rituals of vodun. It is due to the fact that vodun elements can be seen in the rituals of Bô. The general perception of West African vodun today is actually more a perception of Bô (Juju in Yoruba) than West African vodun.

Say about 23% of the population of Benin some 1 million people, follow Vodun. (This does not count other traditional religions in Benin.) In addition, many of the 41.5% of the population that refer to themselves as Christian practice a synchronized religion, not dissimilar from Haitian Vodou or Brazilian Candomblé; indeed, many of them are descended from freed Brazilian slaves who settled on the coast near Ouidah.



In Togo, about half the population practices indigenous religions, of which Vodun is by far the largest, with some 2.5 million followers; there may be another million Vodunists among the Ewe of Ghana: 13% of the population of Vodunists, most of whom are Ewe and 15 million people 68% in Ghana practice traditional religion most of whom are Akan people. In Ivory Coast, 50% of the population practise traditional religion most of whom are Akan people.

According to census data, about 14 million people practise traditional religion in Nigeria, most of whom are Yoruba practicing Vodun, but no specific breakdown is available.

European colonialism, followed by some of the totalitarian regimes in West Africa, has tried to suppress Vodun as well as other African indigenous religions. However, because the vodun deities are born to each clan, tribe, and nation, and their clergy are central to maintaining the moral, social and political order and ancestral foundation of its village, these efforts have not been successful. Recently there have been moves to restore the place of Vodun in national society, such as an annual International Vodun Conference held in the city of Ouidah in Benin that has been held since 1991.



credit: Manbo Asogwe Rose (Germany)

9/27/13 — 9:58pm SHORT URL: <http://tumblr.co/ZheKcswBUF10>

THE CHIEF OF AKANS IN AMERICA...NANA KIMATI DINIDULU HAS JOINED THE ANCESTORS



How I wished I have a way to

educate the Sankofa conscious cultural practitioners that when a great community traditional chief joins the ancestors, people have to wait for the immediate family to make formal announcement before other people try to compete against each other on who was the first to deliver the sad news. This is an anomaly that the elders of Akan culture should address. The young people need to be taught proper protocols so that they can mature into doing the best thing to keep the culture alive.

We forgive the young people for the fact that the shocking nature of his sudden demise and the weight of his sterling contribution to culture, arts, history and everything made the people forget about any protocol. Nana Kimati Dinizulu was the son of the man who started the Akans in America traditions. His father, Omanhene and Okomfohene Nana Yao Opare Dinizulu was a dedicated man who taught the son to carry on the heritage after his transition.

The article below culled from an online blog by brother Shaka Opare enlightens you the reader about the man, Kimati from Shaka's lens. Enjoy a good read:

- **"Bro, You never heard Mingus?!?"**



KIMATI DINIZULU

A great musician, good friend, and elder Kw eYao Agyepon said to me a few weeks before he died, "Kw ame, GO TO THE DOCTOR and GET CHECKED OUT. AND DO IT OFTEN". He went on to tell me how he never ever ever thought that "this" could happen to him. He was in pain but still carrying on as he always had, at least on the surface. I remember him making a point to come to as much stuff as he could in the last days. He is missed, as are many others from his generation. Those who de-littered the way and cleared away thicket so that those in my generation could find a path to progress in these arts of Africa are all but gone now. And this day is heavy; heavy with strong emotion and feeling of loss as we all move our thoughts and focus our memories on possibly the most influential of that last generation, Nana Yao Kimati Dinzulu. He was a father, a brother, a Man's man, a teacher, a friend, a musician, a historian, a curator, a visionary, a guider of dreams and aspirations, a spiritualist, a medicine man, a "shoemaker with no shoes", and a King. As I hit each key to write this, I hold back the tears because when I write, the truth of my emotions tend to spill from my soul to my fingers, so this is rough.....

There is a circle, then there is an inner circle that really knew Nana Kimati and spent time, lots of time with him. We all have our stories...

"Bro....You don't know Mingus?!?"

He turned me on to Mingus. If that were all that would have been enough. That changed my life. He helped shape and mold me into a dynamic and unique artist and for that I am eternally grateful. I'm glad I got to let him know that, but there's so much more. He put me in places and gave me experiences that I couldn't have had without him. He introduced me to a world of spirituality that was always present in my life but felt unattainable and a little confusing partially due to the esoteric nature of the gerontocracy at the time. Kimati made it accessible.

He cussed, and talked about Jay-Z, Biggie, Pac and "Nasty Nas". Then we went into the shrine and spoke about God and the serious nature of the Earth's forces. Then we put on the reel to reel and listened to a rare Coltrane recording he had and talked about Chief Bey and Baba Ishangi and Queensbridge and watched film of Dinizulu African Dancers and Drummers performing in the 60's being introduced by a very young James Earl Jones (dude had the same deep voice even back then). We marveled at his stories of when he got "stuck" in Africa for 2 years and all the crazy things that happened on tour when he was out with Jazz cats or playing with Irish bands. WE wanted that life. He gave us something to aspire to. We are the artists we are because of how he did it and in many ways we are still chasing his success. He made us understand the seriousness of the arts! Of our culture! And of what it meant to be an African-American artist learning, performing, and teaching the African arts.

"Bro... If you don't know it, then don't fucking teach it"

He was the product of his parents. The late Great Nana Yao Opare Dinizulu I (I affectionately refer to him as Big Nana as he was the first and reigns paramount for me on all fronts) and Auntie Alice Dinizulu. He continued for us what they started for so many people. He embellished their love for us as young people and we were all the better for it.

Nana Kimati perfectly adapted an amalgamation of inner city street culture and the African culture we were all raised in. As artists, historians, and preservers of the culture, he taught us that we cannot and should not neglect 400 years of presence in America in an attempt to be more "African". He always taught us about the contributions of Africans in America to the music, dance, and overall culture of America. We may have never known about the legacy of African dance and drum in this country had it not been for Big Nana, then Nana Kimati. No doubt having benefited from the wisdom of his Dad, Kimati was able to transfer his unique perspective to my generation in a way that at one time or another made us all idolize him. He taught us that we can still be *us*, still be some real 'dudes' and practice the culture. He would always ask me about Go-Go music in the early years and tell me how much he wanted me to take him to a "Go-Go club" when he came to DC. No adult would ever say that to us. I miss that dude. I'm gonna miss him forever now.

This letter feels incomplete because I could really go on forever with stories of my own as well as Bob's, O's, Kwe's, Kwab's, and Brema's recollections. Nana Kimati was truly the most quotable dude we all have ever known. But this is what I can muster for now and I wanted to grab what I had and get it on 'paper'. In the coming days I know the conversations and writings will span hours and be tremendously heartfelt, until then please forgive the limited nature of this transmission.

A MESSAGE TO MYSELF AND TO MY BROTHERS:

We have to get and stay healthy my Dudes. Drink, but don't overdo it. Smoke but be cautious and know when to say when. Or don't do it at all. **GO TO THE DOCTOR AND DENTIST.** We sometimes need Western medicine to fight Western diseases. Enjoy life but balance it all with restraint and good diet. We all have Suns. And if you don't, we are all uncles so we have young males we're responsible for. Let us heed the words from Uncle KweYao and take better care of ourselves. We aren't getting any younger and I'm not trying to bury none of y'all ANY TIME SOON. I love you Bros. That's real and today we lost our Big Bro. We owe it to the next generation to be around to spread the legacy and do our part to help keep the fire burning eternally.

Kwame Shaka Opare

aka Robeson the Renaissance"

7/9/13 — 12:41am SHORT URL: <http://tumblr.co/ZheKcspCpmvt>

NANA ASUO GYEBI AKOMKESE FESTIVAL HELD IN NEW YORK



A special celebration of Akom tagged Nana Asuo Gyebi Akomkese has been held in Brooklyn New York as part of the International African Arts Festival which came to a close yesterday Sunday, July 7th.



The festival that attracted many important New York, Washington DC and other International guests was hosted by the OBAATANPA House of Hope International Inc's spiritual division, the OBAATANPA Nabosumfie led by Okomfo Nana Akosua Baakan Okukuranpon Yirenkyiw a from



New York.

"Nana Asuo Gyebi is an Akan river deity (obosum) who is a healer and protector of the Nana Akonnedi Shrine in Kubease, Larteh, in Ghana, West Africa. His shrine was brought to America by the late Nana Okomfohene Akua Oparebea, who was the chief priestess of the Nana Akonnedi Shrine for over 65 years. Nana Asuo Gyebi's priesthood flourished in the United States under the leadership of the late Okomfohene Nana Yao Opere Dinizulu I, and other priests who were trained by both leaders.

Nana Asuo Gyebi is compassionate, patient, and just. He helps people solve problems, and find their true path in life."

Other details will be posted soon.

7/9/13 — 12:28am SHORT URL: <http://tumblr.co/ZheKcspCl-Wg>

OUR CULTURE OUR IDENTITY WITH PREKESE GHANAMEDIA:-HOMOWO FESTIVAL PART I



This harvest festival is celebrated by the Ga people from the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

It begins with the sowing of millet by the traditional priests in May. After this, thirty-day ban on drumming is imposed on the land by the priests.

The festival is highlighted at varying times by different quarters of the Ga tribe. The Ga-mashie group of the tribe will celebrate theirs' a little earlier than the La group.

Homowo recounts the migration of the Gas and reveals their agricultural success in their new settlement. According to Ga oral tradition, a severe famine broke out among the people during their migration to present day Accra. They were inspired by the famine to embark on massive food production exercises which eventually yielded them bumper harvest.

Their hunger ended and with great joy they "hooted at hunger" this is the meaning of the word HOMOWO.

Quartey-Papafio, A.B. " The Ga Homowo Festival", Journal of the African Society, Vol. 19, 1919



THE GA HOMOWO FESTIVAL

It is not intended here to trace the origin of the Ga Homowo or Harvest Custom of the Accra peoples. This takes place yearly according to the Native Calendar as given out by the Priest of the Fetish Dantuo of the Dantse Dsanwe people of the Asere Quarter. Asere is a sub-division of

the Ga Division of the Accra District of the Eastern province of the Gold Coast Colony, nor to discuss why Harvest Custom has been held for so many centuries past and still continues.

The Ga language is spoken among a very limited population of the Gold Coast. Neither this population nor the territory it occupies is of much consequence in comparison with those of the neighbouring nations. However what the Gas lack in numbers and extent of territory, they have made up in valour and sound common sense-so much so that they have been frequently attacked. The Gas have never been conquered and made slaves of. The soil of the land has always been, and is, the property of the Ga people.

What is sought to be done here is simply to give, as far as possible, the days and dates which make up the native year with some of the events which take place on each day through out the native year, according to the Native Calendar, as given to all the Gas by the Priest of the



Damte Fetish.

This Damte Dsanwe place and the Dantu Fetish with its Priest has already been referred to, and described, in one of my articles entitled "The Native Tribunals of the Akras". This much can be said here, that the Damte Dsanwe people are, or are supposed to be, of Akan origin, and are some of the real Ga people who first came to this part of the Coast with their Mantse and Priest and regular suite, in accordance with the



Native Court or State.

As with other tribes and peoples of the Ga nation, the subsequent wars and strife greatly reduced them in numbers and power; their Mantse is no longer with them and the real Stool of that people is not seen, neither has its whereabouts been known for centuries past. It is supposed to have been taken by their Mantse or Chief from Dante Dsanwe to Adutsoshishi in the Gbese Quarter of Accra; but what has become of the Stool, the State sword and other paraphernalia no one can say, or those who know are not willing to speak.

Their priest now is the head of the Dante Dsanwe people, and they and the Kpakpatsewe people now recognise and serve one Mantse, the Akwashong Mantse.

Why is it that in the same town, Dante Dsanwe people first celebrate the Homowo Harvest Festival, and then join the rest of the Akras in celebrating a similar festival a fortnight later?



The reason given for this by tradition is that some time in the history of the Ga people the Paramount Chief, or Ga Mantse; left Accra for the towns in the east of the Ga territory, and when the time for the Homowo Harvest Festival came on during his absence, the Gas who were left behind empowered the Priest of the Fetish Dantu to perform the Custom and offer the sacrifices usually done by the Ga Mantse, which he did, with the assistance of the Akwashong Mantse; and a fortnight afterwards the Ga Mantse returned to Accra, and, although informed of what had taken place, he insisted upon holding another Homowo Harvest Festival, in which he asked all the Ga people to join, which they did; hence the second celebration also became a fixture in the annals of the Ga people, though in reality a sort of commemoration of the return of the Ga Mantse to Accra.

It will therefore be seen that although there appear to be two celebrations of the Ga Homowo in one year, yet the real Ga Homowo or Harvest Festival is the first one - the one known as the Dante Dsanwe Homowo - because that is the one celebrated at the end of the native year and properly according to native law and custom.

Why and how it came about that the Dante Priest alone works out the Calendar for all the Ga people cannot be exactly made out from the traditions handed down to date, but it is true that even today all the Akras at Accra join the Dante Dsanwe people and Kpakpatsewe people in celebrating the Dante Dsanwe Homowo by preparing privately the special meal on that Saturday and enjoying it, and then join. The Dante

Dsanwe and Kpakpatsewe people in the public celebrations, which take place in the afternoon of that day.



It would appear to some readers strange that, although the Asere Quarter of the town of Accra is the oldest and practically the mother of the rest of the Quarters and other towns, not only at Accra, but down to the other towns on the East.

However not many of the Principal Fetishes are located there, and that most of them are in Gbese Quarter; and also, that although in the days of yore a Fetish was supposed to be an important thing to be possessed by every chief, there is no real or public Fetish located at the Abola Quarters where the Paramount Chief, or Ga Mantse, now has his residence, neither is any such Fetish at the Alata Quarter.

The reason for this given by tradition is that, when Prince Okaija, who afterwards became the first known Mantse of Gbese and must have learnt or known something about the Christian religion in Portugal, returned to Accra, and when he found the state of things in the place and also saw so many fetishes collected together at Asere with their Priests, he kept his eyes on them.

When he came to establish his Quarter, now known as the Gbese Quarter, Prince Okaija took with him those of the fetishes which he discovered were substantial; that is, those that derive their source or sources of devotion from some real things in existence, such as land, water, stream, sea or mountain, as the source of personification the medium of their intercourse with the Divine being among particular devotees of such fetishes, and took them with him to the Gbese Quarter, i.e.



FetishSource of DevotionSakumoThe Sakumo RiverNaiThe SeaKorleThe Korle LagoonOkuThe Densu River

But all the rest of the fetishes which had no real or particular source of devotion he left at Asere, and they remained there till the Sempes and the Akugmai Aji left the Asere Quarter for Ngleshi, now called James Town, and they took with them the Oyieni Fetish and such like other



fetishes.

Moreover the fact of no fetish being found at Abola Quarter is explained in the fact that the Abola people are not Gas, and when the Ga Mantse went and resided there that did not make them Gas because the Ga Mantse was not, and all his successors have never been Gas, neither have they really been regarded by the people as such.

It will also be seen that all the stools in Accra had fetishes attached to them originally, but till the Sakumo Fetish was discovered and the Ga Stool was removed from Asere to Abola, it had no fetish attached; the Ga Stools, which have stool fetishes attached, are given hereunder



with their fetishes.

Stools Fetish Damte Dsanwe Stool, Dantu Fetish, Akwashong Stool, Gua Fetish and Abudu Fetish, Asere Stool (Nikolai) Kalan, Kotope, Oyeadu, Karinana and other fetishes, Sempe Stool, Osekan, Oyeini, Abosu Abla, Obutu Oyeini and Karinana fetishes

All the fetishes attached to the Sempe Stool are supposed to be part of the Nai Fetish, and they really do all their things with the Nai Fetish. The Akugmai Aji Stool observes its Yam Custom the same day with the Gbese Stool.

All these fetishes, being Ga in origin, celebrate the corn harvest, and do so a week before their stools celebrate their Yam Custom; all the remaining stools of the Akras are either Twi, in origin or follow or continue or adopt the Twi custom and have Fetishes, but they celebrate Adai and not corn festival before their stools celebrate their Yam Customs either in the same week or week after.

The Twi Stools in Accra Town are:

Stool. Fetish Gbese Stool, Korle Fetish, Otublohum Stool, Afeaye Fetish, Alata Stool, Okai Jata Afeaye Fetish, Charway Fetish. The Banafo fetish they worship is a fetish which some Mowele people who came to Accra for fishing purposes brought with them for self-protection. The Kwai Kuma Fetish is not attached to the Alata Stool; it is a family fetish. Abola Stool The Abola Stool has no known Fetish. Akagmai Aji Stool Akagmai Aji Stool has no known Fetish.

The Korle Fetish is, said to be the fetish of the Gbese Stool by grace only because it is a Ga Fetish and celebrates the corn feast instead of the Adai or Yam Custom. However just as the Sakumo was made or considered to be a fetish for the Ga Stool because the Ga Mantse performs the duties of the Priest in the absence of one either through death or journey, the Korle and, Sakumo Fetishes both observe the corn



feast

The Oyeadu Fetish is Asere Fetish, but it is not recognised as the fetish of the Asere Stool, and it is part of the tradition of Asere that the Oyeadu either comes out of or is a part of the Kalan Fetish, and that what the Oyeadu Fetish spoils, the Kalan repairs.

It is admitted that the Oyeadu Fetish does wicked things; therefore if anyone die in childbirth the Oyeadu Fetish Priest and his people take all the goods of the deceased, and no one goes to the bush towns or farms or the water places for water on the Sunday following the day of which that person so died.

Until that person's place or house is purified on account of what the satellites get as their share from the booty in the dead person's property; they afterwards started to commit acts not short of murder, till they got into conflict with the police and their Priest imprisoned with hard labour and the fetish removed to Ussher Town, Accra.

The Fetish Karinana is the same as the Kalan, and the head of them all; any important meeting by the fetishes with their Priest are held at its place.

The Obrafo is not one of the fetishes which the Ga people came with; it is located at Asere Quarter. They took it from the Akwamu refugees as hostages for their good faith and good behaviour whilst they lived among them.

As the Akwamu refugees, now the Otoo Street or Otublohum people, used it as a medicine fetish for war, the Asere took it from them and handed it to their Qtu, which used to celebrate the yearly Custom which is now given the name of the Obrafo, known as the Obrafo or Yam Custom.

The Kotope Fetish, now a fetish of the Aseres, was formerly like the Obrafo War Fetish a Medicine Fetish for War; it came from the Salagah wilds, and it was this fetish that the Akwashi Mantse Kwatei Kojo took with him when he went to Crepee War, known as Neire, some time in 1828 or later.

The fetishes mentioned above are what one would call Town Fetishes or Seem-Town Fetishes, inasmuch as the celebration of their Corn Custom or Yam Custom has relationship to Yam Custom of the Stools, and precedes the Yarn Custom of a stool to which they are attached, and their customs are some of the yearly fixtures in the annals of the Ga people.

There are other fetishes and stools in the town of Accra which although they are not or cannot be considered Town Fetishes and Stools, yet they celebrate their yearly feast just as the other Stools and Fetishes, e.g.

Stool Fetish The Ankrah Family Stool in the Otublohum Quarter of Accra The Dade Ban Fetish The Damte Dsanwe Stool in Asere Quarter of Accra The Dantu Fetish The Jas. Asafoatse Stool of the Amatsewe People in the Asere Quarter of Accra The Afieye Fetish The Wamback (otherwise called Welbeck Family Stool, which is the Jase Asafoatse Stool in the Gbese Quarter of Accra The Odonfeh Fetish The Sempe Mensah Stool in the Sempe Quarter of Accra The Hansen Afeina Stool of the Sempe Quarter of Accra The Dade Fetish
Besides these two different ranks of Stools and Fetishes, there are other Stools and Fetishes, which are either Twi, Fante, Dangme or



Aw una, celebrating their Yam Custom yearly.

Notwithstanding the pomp and expense attaching to the Homowo Harvest Festival, the people also join in the celebration of Christian feasts, spending their money equally, if not more, in the Christmas and New Year season festivities. Some are even inclined to have a hand in the celebration of the Muhammedan (Muslim) Feast in their principal feast days, and these show clearly that although the civilised and uncivilised native of the Gold Coast, in appearance and way, seems to be conservative in many things, yet in matters of religion he or she is a cosmopolitan in the extreme, regarding one faith as good as another.

The Obutus, who are Gas and form part of the Ga nation, being really under the Ga Stool, spend their Homowo or Harvest Festival, which they call ohume, a week after the general Ga celebration - that is, on the fourth Saturday after the Dame Dsanwe Homowo Custom has been



celebrated.

It is believed by some that the Obutu people are not Gas, because they use in their ordinary conversation and transaction a language called by them Afutu, which appears to be different from the language usually employed by their brothers, the Gas on the east side of the Sakumo River. There really is no difference between the Obutus and the Gas; to say the very least, nearly all the Obutus understand the language used by their brothers on this side of the Sakumo River.

The Afutu language is nothing more or less than the language used by the fetishes on both sides of the Sakumo River, and which the Fetish Priest mostly employs when addressing the fetishes on both sides of the Sakumo River.

The Qsu or Christiansborg people celebrate their Homowo or Harvest Festival on the second Tuesday after the Gas generally have celebrated theirs, and, on the fourth Tuesday after starting of the days of the year on the first Monday of the native year by the Dantu Priest.



The La or Labadi people and a few of the towns down to Addah celebrate their Homowo or festival season on the fourth week after the Ga people have celebrated their own—that is, on the third Saturday after the general Accra celebration.

The Nungua people celebrate their Homowo season on the fifth Saturday after that of the Accras. The Tema people celebrate theirs a week



after the Damte Dsanwe Homowo.

There are, roughly speaking, fifty-one weeks in the whole of the Ga native year.

The native week is not all made up of eight days, as is generally alleged; only the week starting from the first Monday, when the native year starts, to the following Monday, is made up of eight days; but all the following weeks are made up of seven days.

It will be seen from the days given in the Native Calendar later on that whilst there are 365 days generally in the English Calendar making 52 weeks, there are only 357 days in the Native Calendar, making a total of 51 weeks. Further, whilst there are 12 months in the English year, the 357 days in the Native year give 12 moons of 28 days and three weeks.



References: Ga Homowo 2009 Handbook

Ghanaweb.com

China Daily Newspaper

7/5/13 — 3:36pm SHORT URL: <http://tumblr.co/ZheKcsoxv6DC>



ASANTEHENE'S 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY AND POWERS

7/2/13 — 5:24pm SHORT URL: <http://tumblr.co/ZheKcsojyZSh>



KWADJO NKANSAH

7/1/13 — 5:30am SHORT URL: <http://tumblr.co/ZheKcsocV4hX>

